

I fully support the vaccine mandate for all Montgomery County employees and in particular for the police and all other public safety employees. It is ironic that any public safety employees and their unions oppose this mandate, I guess their definition of public safety does not include public health. If anything, those involved in public safety should be held to a higher standard of public health compliance given their mission and interaction with the public.

The arguments in the joint statement of the three unions opposed to the mandate are ridiculous. To essentially say that the council cannot enact public health measures to protect its citizens in a crisis but must negotiate through collective bargaining is totally absurd. And to attack the sponsors of this bill as hiding in their homes while their members serve the public is outrageous and disgusting. The mandate will protect their members, not the opposite. They are not serving the “public faithfully” when they will not comply with common sense public health measures.

County Executive Elrich says the mandate will run the risk of serious consequences meaning staff shortages. The opposite is true since this measure will both protect the health of the staff and as well the public. Nationally time and time again, when faced with a mandate, employees in both the public and the private sector have complied with the mandate with very minor exceptions. It’s unfortunate that for some only a mandate will get them to do the right thing.

The opposition to the mandate stems from either outright ignorance, an inability to analyze and comprehend scientific and medical information, or mindless regurgitation of the misinformation and political nonsense spewed out by FOX News and other right-wing media, as well as to the preposterous assertions of unions of what their rights are under collective bargaining agreements.

I also oppose any religious exemptions for the mandate. I am not aware of any religion that says “Thou shall not vaccinate.” Nevertheless, religious beliefs should not triumph over the need to protect the public health. People are not entitled to public service employment.

Regarding those who assert they have the individual liberty to determine whether to be vaccinated (despite the pandemic), I suggest you ask them, especially men, “do you support the absolute right of a women to get an abortion” to reveal their consistency or more likely hypocrisy on what individual liberty means.

I also suggest that those opposed to the mandate state their medical or scientific qualifications and the medical science supporting their position.

While the testimony of many on this bill may oppose the mandate, I believe the overwhelming majority of Montgomery County citizens support the mandate for all employees with no exception. I have not seen any polls on this matter specifically in Montgomery County but polls in other states and a national one on the Biden Covid Vaccine Mandate all show a large majority in support of vaccine mandates for employees. And Montgomery County is not Alabama!

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